



# ACCEPTING WIC CHECKS: A Cashier's Guide

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Montana WIC Program  
December 2008



# WIC Provides:

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- Nutrition education and counseling
- Referrals to other assistance programs or medical resources
- Specific foods meeting the federal nutritional requirements and the needs of the participant



# WIC Participants

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- Must meet the following requirements:
  - Categorical – be a pregnant, postpartum or breastfeeding woman, an infant or child up to their fifth birthday
  - Financial – be at 185% of poverty level
  - Nutritional – have a documented nutritional risk
  - Residential – either live in or receive medical services in the area the WIC clinic is located



# Montana WIC Checks

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- Are given to WIC participants for specific food items
- They are valid for a specific time period, including the first and last days to use
- Only the participant, parent or proxy may cash the WIC check
- Authorized signatures are listed on the WIC ID Packet



# WIC Participants May:

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- Take advantage of “Buy One, Get One Free” sales, IF both items are WIC approved
- Get sale prices
- Use coupons to reduce the amount of sale, IF your store take coupons
- Use club cards or store cards



# Size Substitutions

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- The participant MAY purchase:
  - 2 half-gallons of milk in place of 1 gallon
  - 1 gallon of milk in place of 2 half-gallons
  - 1 16-oz box infant cereal in place of 2 8-oz boxes
  - 2 8-oz cheese in place of 1 1-lb cheese
- NO CANS OF POWDERED INFANT FORMULA OVER 16-OZ. Only the brand, size and format specified on the WIC check.



# The WIC Participant Is To:

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- Check the valid dates on the WIC check
- Select only the food items authorized on the WIC check
- Separate each WIC purchase according to the items listed on the check
- Present the WIC check to the cashier before the purchase is rung up



# Cashiers Are To:

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- Ask for the WIC check and the WIC ID Packet; you MUST refuse to accept the check without the ID packet
- Verify the name on the check to the participant name on the ID Packet; you MUST refuse to accept the check if the name is not on the ID Packet
- Verify the dates are current; you MUST refuse to accept the check if it is out of date, either early or late. Be sure the year is correct.





# Cashiers Are To:

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- Ring up the order
- Process the foods in the order they are listed on the WIC check
- Mark off each item on the check as you ring it up
- Use the Approved Foods List to ensure the items are allowable
- Verify the food items match the authorized items on the WIC check, including any brand name items



# Cashiers Are To:

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- Ensure the food items do not go over the allowed quantity or ounces
- Ask the participant if they intended to purchase any missing items
- Ask the participant for any coupons, IF your store takes them
- Deduct the value of the coupons from the purchase total
- Write the purchase total in the "Actual \$ Amount of Sale" block



# Cashiers Are To:

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- Write today's date in the "Actual Date of Sale" block
- Give the WIC check to the participant/proxy to sign
- Compare the signature of the customer to those on the ID Packet; you **MUST** refuse to accept the check if the signatures do not match or the signature is missing
- Return the ID Packet to the participant/proxy with the receipt



# Do NOT Allow The WIC Participant To:

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- Purchase more with their WIC check than what is authorized on it
- Buy the wrong brands or formats
- Buy unauthorized items (candy, diapers, baby wipes, etc.)
- Cash an out-of-date check, either early or late
- Cash WIC checks with breastfeeding messages for food items



# What If:

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- The check is out of date?
  - Do not take the check. Ask if the participant has a current check.
- There are more items than what's on the check?
  - Do NOT include the extra items in the WIC purchase. The participant must pay for them separately.
  - The WIC participant may not pay nor receive cash in a WIC transaction



# What If:

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- The participant wants to cash two or three checks at one time?
  - This is allowed. Each check must be rung up and handled as a separate purchase.
- The amount of sale is already filled in?
  - Do NOT take the check. It must be re-issued by the local WIC agency.
- You make a mistake in the amount of sale?
  - Draw a single line through the error, initial it, and write the correct amount in the "Correction" block.



# What If:

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- The participant gets angry or rude.
  - Call your manager or another cashier as a witness. Stay in control of the situation. Complete the complaint form and mail it to the State WIC office.
- Please report suspected abuse.



# What If:

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- We are out of/don't carry the specific infant formula. Can we substitute another?
  - NO. Do NOT substitute brands or format (powdered, concentrate, RTF). Either the participant must wait for your next delivery or go elsewhere.
- There are corrections or additions on the check?
  - Do NOT accept the check. It must be re-issued by the local WIC agency.





# Have questions or problems?

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- Call your local WIC agency. They are your first and best source of WIC information.
- Call the State WIC office at 800-433-4298, option 2, or 406-444-5530.